

Placer Vineyards Accomplishes Blueprint Objectives

By F.C. "Rocky" Rockholm

The Placer County Board of Supervisors made the right decision July 16 when it voted unanimously to approve Placer Vineyards, opting for a base plan that calls for building slightly more than 14,000 dwellings.

The Sacramento Bee questioned that decision in an editorial, arguing for the Blueprint plan, a higher-density option that would allow more than 21,000 residences to be built on 5,230 acres at the southwest corner of Placer County. That option is a response to the Blueprint Project, a smart-growth program developed by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

Either plan works for me, base or Blueprint. Both rely on sound planning principles and contain smart-growth features.

I helped develop the Blueprint Project as a member of the SACOG Board of Directors, first as a representative of the Roseville City Council and now as a representative of the board of supervisors.

Blueprint is based on seven key principles: transportation choices, mixed-use development, compact development, housing choice and diversity, use of existing assets, quality design and natural-resource conservation.

Looking at the base plan for Placer Vineyards, I see those principles at work.

It will be a sustainable community with mixed uses and about 700 acres of open space. The base plan includes more than 50 parks and a community-wide trail system. It protects wildlife, enhances riparian corridors and preserves oak groves.

The project provides for a mix of housing with low, medium and high densities. Placer Vineyards will have about 4,100 residents per square mile at build-out. That's substantially higher than the 2,736 people per square mile in Rocklin and 2,838 people per square mile in Roseville.

The project will feature a town center with restaurants, theaters and a civic center. It will include 11 church sites, a library, high school, two middle schools, six elementary schools and a cemetery. In keeping with Blueprint principles, residents will be able to walk to every park and school along trails and bike paths.

Also in the plans is a complete bus transit system that will include rapid-transit buses.

I supported the base plan because it was developed in consultation among proponents, county staff and area residents over the years and is consistent with the county's adopted 1994 General Plan.

I also am committed to giving Blueprint principles a chance to take root in Placer Vineyards. Either option, the base plan or Blueprint, will allow us to accomplish that objective.

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